Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of coating a cell comprising the steps of:

placing the cell in a solution of hydrocolloid;

removing the cell from the solution of hydrocolloid ; and

placing the cell in a cross-linking solution after removing the cell from the solution of hydrocolloid, thereby providing the cell with a thin coating of the hydrocolloid; and

storing the cell in solution.

2. (Original) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the hydrocolloid is an alginate.

3. (Previously Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the hydrocolloid is Na-alginate.

B1

4. (Previously Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the hyrocolloid is low-methoxy pectin (LMP).

5. (Previously Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the hydrocolloid is either κ or ι carrageenan.

6. (Previously Amended) A method as defined Claim 1, wherein the hydrocolloid solution is in Calcium Adjusted Modified Marc's Ringer (CAMMR) solution.

7. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the cell is a *Xenopus laevis* egg and embryos.

8. (Previously Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the cross-linking solution is a solution of Ca, Ba or K ions.

9. (Original) A method as defined in Claim 8, wherein the cross-linking solution is a solution of $CaCl_2$, $BaCl_2$ or KCl.

10. (Currently Amended) A method as defined in Claim 9, wherein the cross-linking solution of $CaCl_2$ or $BaCl_2$ is at a concentration of from 0.25% and the KCl solution is at a concentration of 0.5%.

11. (Previously Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein said thin layer coating of hydrocolloid is up to about 50 micrometer in thickness.

B1

13. (Previously Amended) A method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the alginate has a high mannuronic acid (M) content.

14. (Previously Amended) A method as defined in Claim 13 wherein the mannuronic acid (M) content of the alginate is from about 29 to about 61 %.